

City of New Castle Tree Commission Meeting
January 7, 2013 -- 5:30 p.m.
City of New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: John Lloyd
Nancy Coning
Susan Keyser
Erv Thatcher
Tom Truman

Members Absent: Chip Patterson
Mark Miller
Fran Peden

Also Present: Pam Patone

Mr. Lloyd convened the meeting at 5:35 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the December 2012 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

New Business

The resident of 170 E. 4th Street sought advice about tree roots pushing up the sidewalk in front of his home. The street tree (American elm) is between the curb and sidewalk. Pictures were circulated. He considers the tree to be a hazard and has concern with public safety and liability. Remedies were discussed including leveling the soil around the tree and laying down sod. Grinding the roots will destabilize the tree.

Old Business

At the December meeting members were asked to review pruning and removal lists for November 2012 and discuss tonight. Ms. Keyser is opposed to any pruning until the tree contractor is better educated and more consistent with the quality of work being performed. She would like to see scope of work and specifications to guide work to be done. The number of pruning jobs on the list was questioned and Ms. Keyser said that some healthy trees are incurring damage as a result of pruning. Ms. Keyser discussed information about procedures she would like to see the Tree Commission explore. At Mr. Lloyd's invitation, Ms. Keyser will prepare a set of specifications.

It was noted that over many years the lack of pruning when trees are young has contributed to the number of trees on the current pruning list. Tree contractor work performance and results of some jobs were discussed.

The November 2012 tree removal list was reviewed. A tree was removed at Third and Delaware Streets because of storm damage.

A motion was made by Mr. Truman to remove the trees on the November 2012 list, excepting #2 which will be addressed by the State. The motion was seconded and approved by a vote of 4 in favor and 1 opposing (Keyser).

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January 2013 Pruning and Removal Lists – It was suggested that work to remove elm tree branches resting on the home at 170 E. 4th Street go forward. No opposition was expressed.

Mr. Lloyd is happy with most of the tree contractor's work and will continue to check work being done as his time allows. He is not in favor of discontinuing pruning work going on at this time. Ms. Keyser questioned his decision and discussion followed.

Ms. Keyser made a motion to suspend ongoing tree work being done and only allow dead wood removal or clearance of tree branches on homes until the tree contractor understands what is expected of him. Mr. Truman seconded the motion. Four (4) voted against the motion and one (1) voted in favor (Keyser). The motion failed.

Ms. Keyser would like to consult with a tree professional that has proper certification. Ms. Coning expressed concern with the Tree Commission working judiciously in order to protect City trees.

Mr. Lloyd reported a dead limb had fallen from a sycamore tree on Second Street and struck a vehicle. City Council President Barthel contacted Mr. Lloyd about eight (8) trees between 19 and 47 East Second Street. Dead wood needs to be removed from the trees and some tree limbs that are growing off old cavities.

Mr. Lloyd made a motion to remove dead wood and a couple select limbs growing off old cavities on the sycamore trees between 19 and 47 East Second Street. Mr. Thatcher seconded the motion. Four (4) voted in favor of the motion and one (1) was opposed (Keyser).

Tree limbs on the house at 170 E. Fourth Street and the sycamore trees on Second Street need to be addressed immediately.

A Zelcovia tree at 110 Delaware Street was struck by a tractor-trailer truck and split open. The resulting damage requires removal of the tree.

The Trustees of New Castle Common plan to have Russ Carlson evaluate the city's elm trees. The elm tree at 119 Delaware Street was struck again over the last two (2) months and may not survive.

The elm tree at the entrance of Battery Park walkway is close to the bulkhead that was severely damaged during the last two (2) storms. Replacement work on the bulkhead will be close to a large elm tree. A protective zone needs to be established to protect the tree. Mr. Carlson has evaluated some of the city's elm trees and Ms. Patone will check Mr. Patterson's records for reports.

There was brief discussion about GIS tree survey software the Tree Commission explored many years ago.

Adjournment

There being no more business to address, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Debbie Turner
Stenographer